

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

9 October 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Soviet Foreign Policies in the Coming Months

SUMMARY

A. Soviet policy toward the West has been marking time during the past several months, awaiting the outcome of the US and British elections. Soviet policy toward the Chinese, however, has been active in pressing for a meeting of Communist parties in Moscow this December. Once the elections are past, Khrushchev can confront the Chinese problem with some of his uncertainties about the West cleared away. A major question is whether Khrushchev will regard the interval between the elections and the December meeting as an opportunity to challenge the West and undercut the Chinese.

B. While Khrushchev will want to strengthen his position for the Moscow meeting, we do not believe he will try to make tough moves against the West. The Soviet record, at least since the Cuban missile crisis, does not indicate that the Chinese problem has had the effect of pushing the USSR onto a more aggressive course in the non-Communist world. Khrushchev almost certainly does not want two confrontations -- with the US and with China -- at the same time. Moreover, other factors which led to improvement of Soviet-American relations last year are still operative.

C. There are, however, important issues and potential trouble spots where Soviet and Western interests clash. The question of US overflights of Cuba is the most explosive and may arise soon after the US election. Khrushchev has little choice but to give Castro strong political support in the UN and elsewhere, but he is likely to try to postpone showdowns until after the December meeting of Communist parties, a meeting which will demonstrate how far the disintegration of Soviet authority over the Communist movement has progressed.

GROUP 1

Excluded from automatic
downgrading and

declassification

1. Early this year the Soviet leaders apparently concluded that the status quo in East-West relations would have to be maintained until the American and British elections were out of the way. This limitation on Soviet policy will soon be lifted as some of Khrushchev's uncertainties about the West are cleared away. Thus Khrushchev can confront the problem of China this December, having had time to weigh the outcome and the policy implications of the elections. One major question for the West is whether Khrushchev is likely to regard the interval between the elections and the Moscow meeting as an opportunity to challenge the West on critical issues and thereby undercut the Chinese attacks on his policies.

General Soviet Policy

2. The line Khrushchev has adopted for dealing with the Chinese Communists has reduced his maneuverability. Presumably, one way of meeting the Chinese challenge would have been to compete in revolutionary fervor, militancy, and aggressiveness. But, at least since the Cuban missile crisis, Khrushchev has developed an alternative response: he has endeavored to stabilize his Western front and demonstrate that it is possible to deal with the West. As pointed out by Togliatti in his much publicized memorandum, the test ban was a significant blow against the Chinese.

S-E-C-R-E-T

Though their ambitions in the underdeveloped areas are contrary to Western interests, much of the Soviets' energy has been devoted to freezing out the Chinese, or at least to undercutting Peiping's position with such non-revolutionary tactics as diplomacy, personal visits, economic and military aid. And in Laos and Vietnam, where the Soviets might have competed effectively with China in militancy, Khrushchev has deliberately tried to disengage the USSR from responsibility and commitments, even going so far as to hint strongly that Hanoi and Peiping cannot count on automatic Soviet support in a war with the West.

3. We conclude from the record of the past two years that the Chinese problem has not had the effect of pushing the USSR onto a more aggressive course in the non-Communist world. This is likely to hold true in the near future. Khrushchev's efforts to prove his revolutionary zeal before the December meeting are likely to be confined to propaganda rather than take the form of tough new moves against the West. He almost certainly does not want two confrontations -- with the US and with China -- at the same time. Moreover, the Soviets have come to realize that the Chinese and their allies cannot be satisfied with anything short of complete capitulation to their position. In addition, those parties which Khrushchev now needs most for support against

S-E-C-R-E-T

the Chinese attack are the moderate elements -- Italy, Rumania, Poland -- which strongly oppose sharpening tensions with the West as the way to overcome Communist disunity.

4. There are other strong forces still operative in Soviet policy which appear to rule out an abrupt shift to a rough line. Soviet military programs in the two years since Cuba have not led to any basic changes in the strategic situation which would support a more aggressive policy. Khrushchev still needs more and longer-term economic credits from the West. He has made some progress in this respect over the past year, and the competition for Soviet orders which he has stimulated promises to yield even more significant gains. He probably attributes this success, at least in part, to the better climate of East-West relations since the test ban treaty. This economic offensive, therefore, is also likely to set some limits on Khrushchev's freedom of action.

5. Thus we do not foresee any preplanned moves to confront the US with sharp challenges prior to the Moscow meeting in December. Nevertheless, there are a number of issues and potential trouble spots where Soviets and Western interests clash. Two important questions which are likely to arise soon after the election and before the Communist meeting are US overflights of Cuba, and the Soviet refusal to pay on its arrears for UN peacekeeping operations.

- 4 -

S-E-C-R-E-T

S-E-C-R-E-T

Cuba

6. Both Khrushchev and Castro have made it clear that the issue of U-2 overflights will be raised once the American election is over. Castro has not yet inscribed this question on the General Assembly agenda, but he has indicated that he intends to put the issue before the UN in some way. The main question is whether the Cubans will eventually order a shootdown if they make no headway with a political solution. Castro may have been sobered by the example of American retaliatory action in the Gulf of Tonkin, but the US cannot count on Castro's moderation.

7. As for Khrushchev, he doubtless hopes that his sharp warnings of last summer will have some effect. In any case, Castro has considerable bargaining power with Khrushchev, on the U-2 issue, since Cuba's support against China in the December Communist meeting is by no means assured. Thus Khrushchev almost certainly will provide Cuba with strong political support, in the UN and elsewhere, on the overflight issue. But the Soviets probably will want to avoid a showdown with the US at least until after the December meeting of Communist parties.

Article 19

8. A second issue could arise when the UN General Assembly convenes for its 19th session on 10 November. Under Article 19,

S-E-C-R-E-T

~~S-E-C-R-E-T~~

the Soviets are technically liable to lose their General Assembly vote if they do not pay on their arrears for the UN peacekeeping forces in the Middle East and the Congo. The Soviets have been adamant in their refusal to pay, and they are not likely to change this position. Article 19 is not likely to be applied automatically, and they seem fairly confident that the unwillingness of many UN members to face a showdown on this issue will enable the Soviets to defeat any parliamentary action to deprive them of a vote. Nevertheless, the Soviets are not looking for a showdown. They have repeatedly hinted that they would welcome a postponement or compromise, and they will be probing for some flexibility in the US position. If the US forces the issue, however, the Soviets will stand their ground.

Potential Trouble Spots

9. The completion of the American election is not likely to have much effect on Soviet moves in a number of trouble spots where the USSR is already involved. It is clear that the limited rapprochement with the West was not intended to curb anti-Western policies in the underdeveloped world or cause the Soviets to forego opportunities. We would emphasize Cyprus and Indonesia as situations where the Soviets are being pressured to take riskier actions. Details of the Soviet-Cypriot agreement will be available soon, and

S-E-C-R-E-T

S-E-C-R-E-T

Sukarno has been in Moscow, evidently to determine how much political and material support he can count on from Moscow for his confrontation with Malaysia. Even in these areas we would expect the Soviets to be wary of becoming overly committed in dangerous situations: vigorous action would risk confrontation with the West, and measures short of vigorous action would incur renewed Chinese ridicule for "betraying the national liberation struggle."

Berlin and Germany

10. One area where we expect a cautious and reserved policy from Moscow is Berlin. Trouble can always erupt in Berlin suddenly and small incidents can escalate rapidly. But we think that in this area Soviet policy is to pursue a more conciliatory line, aimed at establishing greater contacts between the East German and West Berlin authorities, and to the extent possible also with Bonn. It is also evident that Soviet policy is shifting from the question of Berlin to the broader question of Germany. What Khrushchev has in mind in pressing for a meeting with Erhard (probably in January) is difficult to perceive, but it is apparent that Soviet diplomacy in Europe is being reactivated. After the Erhard meeting, the Soviets will be urging a visit by de Gaulle, and contacts with a new (or old) British Prime Minister are to be expected.

- 7 -

S-E-C-R-E-T

~~S-E-C-R-E-T~~

Southeast Asia

11. The Soviets are also unlikely to push an aggressive line in Laos and Vietnam. Once the American election is over Soviet diplomacy in these areas may become more active in promoting a Geneva conference. Despite earlier threats by Moscow to withdraw from its responsibility as co-chairman of the Geneva conference, Khrushchev has put off any final decision. Some time ago the Soviets told the Laotian ambassador that there was little chance for a diplomatic movement until after the American election. Thus Moscow might make one more try to put Laos, and Vietnam as well, under international negotiation. In the process, the Soviets would be likely, on the one hand, to threaten the US with the prospect that they will wash their hands of the problem, while indicating to China and North Vietnam, on the other hand, that in any enlarged confrontation the USSR might publicly side against them, as in the Sino-Indian border war. They have already sent diplomatic notes to unaligned countries attacking both US and Chinese policy in Southeast Asia.

The Moscow Meeting

12. Overshadowing for the present every other aspect of Soviet policy is the coming meeting of Communist parties in December.

- 8 -

S-E-C-R-E-T

Scarcely a move is made in Moscow that is not in some way related to anti-Chinese maneuvering. The meeting in December will be a landmark in the breakup of the Communist movement. Of the 25 parties invited to Moscow, six will probably boycott the meeting: those of China, North Korea, North Vietnam, Japan, Indonesia, and Albania. Of the remaining parties, many are reluctant to attend and will come only to "expound their own views," as the Italian party has put it.

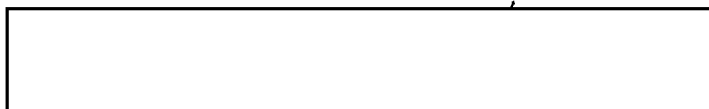
13. This reluctance has already established certain limitations on what the Soviets can accomplish. No formal condemnation of China is likely, no "excommunication" of China is likely, and no new International is likely. Thus the Soviets will have to be satisfied with a general statement of Communist policies, although the Soviet delegates will almost certainly exert heavy pressure for a declaration that can be turned against Chinese views.

14. Soviet acceptance of such limitation on the objectives of the meeting may sway the Rumanians and persuade them to attend. As of now, however, they are still uncommitted, and there is a possibility that they made another attempt at mediation during the visit of their high level delegation to Peiping. If the Rumanians do attend, their presence will strengthen the faction that seeks to play down the dispute, avoid a general conference,

prolong negotiations, and extend overtures to China, It is possible that this group, which has the support of Tito, will succeed in selling Togliatti's proposal for a group of parties to undertake a mission of conciliation to Peiping.

15. Regardless of the specific outcome of the December meeting, the fact that the Soviets are going ahead to hold the conclave without China and its allies, marks an important turning point for world communism. In effect, the Communist camp will have formally split. The Chinese may counter by organizing a meeting of their own. They hinted at this possibility when they published a resolution by the New Zealand party, suggesting a conference of parties which shared their views in order to "coordinate policy" if Moscow forced its plan on the rest of the Communist world.

FOR THE BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES:



SHERMAN KENT
Chairman

25X1

- 10 -

S-E-C-R-E-T